

MEDIA ADVISORY

Travis "Victory or Death" letter returns Friday

Arrival ceremony and exhibit will be carried worldwide via the Internet

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AUSTIN — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson today announced viewers across the world will be able to witness the return of the iconic William Barret Travis "Victory or Death" letter to the Alamo starting Friday. The arrival ceremony and exhibit at the Alamo will be carried live on the World Wide Web, giving viewers unprecedented access to the 300-year-old mission.

For those who can't make it to Alamo Plaza for this special event, the 4 p.m. arrival ceremony will be captured as a high-quality, three-camera television production aired around the globe at www.travisletter.org. Inside the Alamo Shrine, a static webcam will broadcast a view of the letter in its protective case and the tens of thousands of people streaming by the iconic document daily.

"Col. Travis had the boldness to address his letter to the People of Texas and All Americans in the world, but his letter took months to reach its audience," Patterson said. "Now it will reach them anywhere in the world in a fraction of a second."

"Information moves at light speed today," Patterson said, "but freedom still takes time. It's my hope this letter and its message of courage will spark a call to liberty for Americans worldwide."

This will be the first time Travis' "Victory or Death" letter has been at the Alamo since it left with a courier on horseback under the cover of darkness during the famous 13-day siege in 1836.

Sometime Friday (the exact time and route are being kept secret for security reasons) the letter will be taken from its home in the archives of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, loaded into a specially equipped truck designed to transport precious cargo and taken to the Alamo. Officers of the Texas Department of Public Safety and San Antonio Police Department will provide security for the letter throughout its journey.

At 4 p.m., Patterson will be joined by Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff; Karen Thompson, president-general of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas; and Michael Waters, chairman of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, to briefly tell the remarkable story of the letter and how it helped change the world. The ceremony will be open to the public.

An honor guard of living history re-enactors will lead a team of Alamo Rangers as they carry the letter under a saber arch provided by the Texas A&M Aggie Corps of Cadets Ross Volunteer Company. As it moves inside the Alamo, Denton County Sheriff William

B. Travis will read his forefather's stirring letter to the sound of a solitary drummer provided by the Texas National Guard.

Once safely inside, the Shrine doors will close and the letter will be carefully placed inside a custom-built, shatter-proof glass display case made by the world-renowned German company Caseworks at a cost of \$20,000. This special case will allow visitors to see both sides of the fragile letter at a safe distance. Armed peace officers will flank the case for the duration of the exhibit.

Public display of the letter will be from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23, through Thursday, March 7. As a prelude to the viewing of the letter, visitors will tour an exhibit detailing Travis' life and the Texas Revolution through fragile historic documents and artifacts from the vaults of the Texas General Land Office and the Alamo.

As always, the Shrine of Texas Liberty is open to visitors free of charge. Free full-size reproductions of the Travis letter will also be available to visitors inside the Shrine. Visitors are asked to be silent and respectful when viewing the document and no flash photography will be allowed to protect the light-sensitive paper. Commemorative items will also be available in the newly renovated gift shop, including an official exhibition guide, a Travis letter inscribed on Belgian chocolate, Travis letter T-shirts, mugs and more. Sales from the Alamo Gift Shop fund the operation of the 300-year-old mission.

The event is being coordinated by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, the Texas General Land Office and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. More than \$100,000 in private donations from the San Antonio-based McCombs Family Foundation, Fort Worth's Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation and Galveston's Moody Foundation will help cover the costs of this extraordinary exhibit. H-E-B, George P. Mitchell and the Kempner Family also contributed to the effort.

For more information on the Alamo, please visit www.travisletter.org or the Official Alamo website at www.thealamo.org. Stay posted with regular updates by clicking "like" on the Travis Letter Returns page on Facebook.

WHO: People of Texas and all Americans in the world

WHAT: Historic return of Travis' "Victory or Death" letter to the Alamo

WHEN: 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 22. Public display is from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 23 to Thursday, March 7. Admission is free.

WHERE: 300 Alamo Plaza, San Antonio, Texas 78205

WHY: To reignite the American spirit of courage and defiance to tyranny.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: There will be a photo opportunity prior to public viewing at 8 p.m. Friday - no lights or flash will be allowed and cameras will be allowed into the Shrine one at a time. A second photo opportunity will be available at 11 a.m. Saturday.

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